THE SPEECHES OF THE LORD DIGBY,

In the *High Court* of *Parliament*.

Concerning Grievances, and the Trienniall *Parliament*.

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THE LORD

DIGBYES SPEECH,

the 9. of *Novem.* 1640.

Mr. Speaker,

YOu have received now a solemn accompt from most of the Shires of *England*, of the severall grievances and oppressions they sustaine, and nothing as yet from *Dorsetshire*; Sir, I would not have you think that I serve for a Land of *Goshen*, that we live there in Sun-shine, whilest darknes & plagues over-spread the rest of the Land: As little would I have you thinke, that being under the same sharpe measure that the rest, we are either insensible and benummed, or that that

shire wanteth a servant to represent its sufferings boldly.

It is true Mr. *Speaker*, the County of *Dorset* hath not digested its Complaints into that formall way of Petition, which others (I see) have done; but have intrusted them to my Partners and my delivery of them by word of mouth unto this Honourable house. And there was given unto us in the county Court, the day of our Election, a short memoriall of the heads of them, which was read in the hearing of the Free-holders there present, who all unanimously with one voyce signified upon each particular, that it was their desire that we should represent them to the *Parliament*, which with your leave, I shall do, and these they are.

1. The great and intollerable burthen of Ship-money, touching the legality whereof they are unsatisfied.

2. The many great abuses in pressing of souldiers, and raysing Monies concerning the same.

3. The multitude of Monopolies.

4. The new Canon, and the Oath to be taken by Lawyers, Divines, *&c.*

5. The

5. The Oath required to be taken by Church Officers to present according to Articles new and unusuall.

Besides this, there was likewise presented to us by a very considerable part of the Clergie of that County, a note of remembrance containing these two particulars.

First, the imposition of a new Oath required to be taken by all Ministers and others; which they conceive to be illegall, and such as they cannot take with a good Conscience.

Secondly, the requiring of a pretended Benevolence, but in effect a Subsidie; under the penalty of Suspension, Excommunication, and Deprivation, all benefit of appeale excluded.

This is all we had particularly in Charge: But that I may not appeare a remisse servant of my Countrey, and of this House; give me leave to adde somewhat of my owne sense.

Truly Mr. *Speaker*, the injurious sufferings of some worthy members of this House, since the dissolution of the two last *Parliaments*, are so fresh in my memory, that I was resolved not to open my Mouth, in any busineſſe wherein freedome and plaine dealing were requisite, until such time, as the breach of our priviledges were vindicated, and the safety of speech setled.

But

But since such excellent Members of our House, thought fit the other day to lay aside that Caution, and to discharge their soules so freely in the way of zeale to his Majesties service, and their Countries good: I shall interpret that confidence of theirs for a luckie Omen to this *Parliament*, and with your permission licence my thoughts too, a little.

Mr. *Speaker*, under those heads which I proposed to you, as the grievances of *Dorsetshire*, I suppose are comprised the greatest part of the mischiefs which have of late years layed battery either to our Estates, or Consciences.

Sir, I doe not conceive this the fit season to search and ventilate particulars, yet I professe I cannot forbeare to adde somewhat, to what was said the last day by a learned Gentleman of the long Robe, concerning the acts of that reverend new *Synod*, made of an old Convocation. Doth not every *Parliament* mans heart rise to see the Prelats thus usurpe to themselves the Grand Preeminence of *Parliament*? The granting of Subsidies, and that under so prepostrous a name as of a *Benevolence*, for that which is a *Malevolence* indeed? A *Malevolence* I am confident in those that granted it, against *Parliaments*: and a *Malevolence* surely in those that refuse it, against those that granted it: for how can

it

it incite leſſe? when they ſee wreſted from them what they are not willing to part with, under no leſſe a penalty then the loſſe both of Heaven and Earth: of Heaven, by excommunication; and of the Earth by Deprivation; and this without Redemption by appeale. What good Chriſtian can think with patience on ſuch an inſnating Oath, as that which is by the new Canons enjoyned to bee taken by all Miniſters, Lawyers, Phyſicians, and Graduates in the Univerſities? where, beſides the ſwearing ſuch an impertinence, as that things neceſſary to ſalvation are contained in Diſcipline; beſides the ſwearing thoſe to bee of Divine right, which amongſt the learned, never pretended to it, as the Arch things in our Hierarchy. Beſides, the ſwearing not to conſent to the change of that, which the State may upon great reaſon thinke fit to alter; Beſides the bottomleſſe perjury of an *&c.* Beſides all this Mr. *Speaker*, men muſt ſwear that they ſweare freely and voluntarily what they are compelled unto; and laſtly, that they ſweare that Oath in the literall ſence, whereof no two of the makers themſelves, that I have heard of, could never agree in the underſtanding.

In a word, Mr. *Speaker*, to tell you my opinion of this Oath, it is a Covenant againſt the King, for Biſhops and the Hierarchy; as

the Scottish Covenants is against them, onely so much worse then the Scottish, as they admit not of the Supremacy in Eccleſiaſticall affaires, and we are ſworne unto it.

Now Mr. *Speaker*, for thoſe particular heads of grievances whereby our Eſtates and properties are ſo radically invaded; I ſuppoſe, (as I ſayd before) that it is no ſeaſon now to enter into a ſtrict Diſcuſſion of them; onely thus much I ſhall ſay of them, with application to the Countrey for which I ſerve, that none can more juſtly complaine, ſince none can more juſtly challenge exemption from ſuch burthens then *Dorſet-ſhiere*; whether you conſider it is a Countrey ſubſiſting much by Trade; or as none of the moſt populous; or as expoſed as much as any to Forraigne Invaſion.

But alaſſe Mr. *Speaker*, particular lamentations are hardly diſtinguiſhable in Vniverſall groanes.

Mr. *Speaker*, it hath bin a Metaphor frequent in *Parliament*, and if my memory faile me not, was made uſe of in the Lord Keepers Speech at the opening of the laſt, that what money Kings raiſed from their Subiects, they were but as Vapours drawne up from the Earth by the Sunne, to bee diſtilled uppon it againe

againe in fructifying ſhowers: The Compariſon Mr. *Speaker*, hathheld of late yeares in this kingdome toounluckily: what hath bin raiſed from the Subject by thoſe violent attractions, hath bin formed, it is true, into Clouds, but how? to darken the Sunnes own luſtre, and hath fallen againe upon the Land only in Hailſtones and Milldews, to batter and proſtrate ſtill more and more our liberties, to blaſt and wither our affections; had the latter of theſe bin ſtill kept alive by our Kings owne perſonall vertues, which will ever preſerve him in ſpight of all ill Counſellors, a ſacred object, both of our admiration and loves.

Mr. *Speaker*, It hath bin often ſaid in this Houſe, and I think can never be too often repeated, *That the Kings of England can doe no wrong*; but though they could Mr. *Speaker* yet Princes have no part in the ill of thoſe actions which their judges aſſure them to bee Juſt, their Counſellours that they are prudent, and their Divines that they are Conſcientious.

This Conſideration Mr. *Speaker*, leadeth me to that which is more neceſſary farre, at this ſeaſon, than any farther laying open of our miſeries, that is, the way to the reme-

dy, by seeking to remove from our Soveraigne, such unjust judges, such pernicious Counsellours, and such disconscient Divines, as have of late yeares, by their wicked practises, provoked aspersions upon the government of the graciousest and best of Kings.

Mr. *Speaker*, let me not be misunderstood, I levell at no man with a forelayd designe, let the faults and those well proved leade us to the men: it is the only true Parliamentary method, and the only fit one to incline our Soveraigne. For it can no more consist with a gracious and righteous Prince to expose his servants upon irregular prejudices; then with a wise Prince to withhold *Malefactors* how great soever from the course of orderly Justice.

Let me acquaint you Mr. *Speaker*, with an Aphorisme in *Hippocrates*, no lesse Authentick (I think) in the body politick then in the naturall. Thus it is Mr. *Speaker*, bodyes to be throghly and effectually purged must have their humours first made fluid and moveable.

The Humours that I understand to have caused all the desperate maladies of this Nation, are the ill Ministers. To purge them away cleerly, they must be first loosened unsetled, and extenuated, which can no way be effected

effected with a gracious Maſter, but by truely repreſenting them unworthy of his protection. And this leadeth me to my motion, which is, that a ſelect Comittee may be apointed to draw out of all that hath been here repreſented, ſuch a Remonſtrance as may be a faithful and lively repreſentation unto his Majeſty of the deplorable eſtate of this his Kingdome, and ſuch as may happily point out unto his cleere and excellent judgement, the pernicious Authors of it. And that this Remonſtrance being drawn, we may with all ſpeed repayre to the Lords, and deſire them to joyn with us in it; And this is my humble motion.

THE LORD DIGBIES SPEECH IN THE *HOUSE* OF Commons, to the Bill for trienniall *Parliaments*.

Janu. 19. 1640.

Mr. *Speaker*,

Rise not now with an intent to speake to the frame and structure of this Bill, nor much by way of answer to objections that may be made; I hope there will bee no occasion of that, but that we shall concurre all unanimously in what concerneth all so universally.

Only Sir, by way of preparation, to the end that wee may not be discouraged in this great worke

worke by difficulties that may appeare in the way of it, I ſhall deliver unto you my apprehenſions in generall of the vaſt importance and neceſſity that we ſhould goe thorow with it.

The Reſult of my ſence is in ſhort this. That unleſſe for the frequent convening of *Parliaments* there be ſome ſuch courſe ſetled, as may not be eluded; neither the people can be proſperous and ſecure, nor the King himſelfe ſollidly happy. I take this to be the *Vnum neceſſarium*: Let us procure this and all our other deſires wil effect themſelves: if this Bill miſcarry, I ſhall have left me no publcke hopes, and once paſt, I ſhall be freed of all publique feares.

The eſſentialneſſe Sir of frequent *Parliaments* to the happineſſe of this Kingdome, might be inferr'd unto you by the reaſon of contraries, from the wofull experience which former times have had of the miſchevous effects of any long intermiſſion of them?

But Mr. *Speaker*, why ſhould we clime higher then the levell wee are on, or thinke further then our own Horizon, or have recourſe for examples in this buſineſſe, to any other promptuary then our owne memories; nay then the experience almoſt of the youngeſt heere?

The

The reflection backward on the distractions of former times upon intermission of *Parliament*, and the consideration forward of the mischiefes likely still to grow from the same cause if not removed, doubtlesly gave first life and being to those two dormant Statutes of *Edward* the 3*d*, for the yearly holding of *Parliament*: And shall not the fresh and bleeding experience in the present age of miseries from the same spring, not to be paralleld in any other, obtaine a wakening, a resurrection for them?

The Intestine distempers Sir, of former ages upon the want of *Parliaments*, may appeare to have had some other cooperative causes, as somtimes, unsuccessefull Warres abroad; somtimes, the absence of the Prince; somtimes, Competitions of Titles to the Crown; somtimes, perhaps the vices of the King himselfe.

But let us but consider the posture, the aspect of this state, both toward it selfe, and the rest of the world, the person of our Soveraigne, and the nature of our sufferings, since the third of his Reigne. And there can be no cause colourably inventable, whereunto to attribute them, but the intermission, or which is worse, the undue frustration of

Parliament, by the unlucky use, if not abuse of Prerogative in the disolving them.

Take into your view Gentlemen, a State in a state of the greatest quiet and security that can be fancied, not onely injoying the calmest peace it selfe, but to improve and secure its happy condition, all the rest of the world at the same time in Tempest, in Combustions, in uncomposable Warres.

Take into your view Sir, a King Soveraigne to three Kingdomes, by a Concentring of all the Royall lynes in his Person, as undisputably as any Mathematicall ones in *Euclide*. A King firme and knowing in his Religion, eminent in vertue; A King that had in his owne time given all the Rights and Liberties of his Subjects a more cleare and ample confirmation freely and gratiously, then any of his Predecessors (when the people had them at advantage(extortedly, I mean in the *Petition of Right*.

This is one Mappe of *England*, Mr. *Speaker*, A man Sir, that should present unto you now, a Kingdome, groaning under that supreme Lawe, which *Salus populi periclitata* would enact. The liberty, the property of the Subject fundamentally subverted, ravisht away by

by the violence of a pretended neceſſity; a triple Crown ſhaking with diſtempers; men of the beſt Conſcience ready to fly into the wilderneſſe for Religion. Would not one ſweare that this were the Antipodes to the other; and yet let me tell you Mr. *Speaker*, this is a Mappe of *England* too, and both at the ſame time true.

As it cannot bee denyed Mr. *Speaker*, that ſince the Conqueſt there hath not bin in this Kingdome a fuller concurrance of all circumſtances in the former Caracter, to have made a Kingdome happy, then for theſe 12. yeares laſt paſt; ſo it is moſt certaine, that there hath not beene in all that deduction of ages, ſuch a Conſpiracie, if one may ſo ſay of all the Elements of miſchiefe in the ſecond Caracter, to bring a flouriſhing Kingdome if it were poſſible, to ſwift ruine and deſolation.

I will be bold to ſay, Mr. *Speaker*, and I thanke *God*, wee have ſo good a King, under whom we may ſpeake boldly of the abuſe of his power by ill Miniſters, without reflexion upon his perſon.

That an Accumulation of all the publique Grievances ſince *Magna Carta*, one upon

another, unto that houre in which the *Petition* of *Right* past into an Act of *Parliament*, would not amount to so oppressive; I am sure not to so destructive a height and magnitude to the rights and property of the Subject, as one branch of our beslaving since the *Petition of Right*.

The branch I meane is the judgement concerning Ship-money. This being a true representation of *England* in both aspects.

Let him Mr. *Speaker*, that for the unmatcht oppression and enthralling of free Subjects in a time of the best Kings raigne, and in memory of the best Lawes enacted in favour of Subjects liberty, can find a truer Cause then the ruptures and intermission of *Parliaments*. Let him, and him alone be against the setling of this inevitable way for the frequent holding of them.

'Tis true Sir, wicked Ministers have bin the proximate causes of our miseries, but the want of *Parliaments* the primary, the efficient Cause.

Ill Ministers have made ill times, but that Sir, hath made ill Ministers.

I have read among the Lawes of the Athenians, a forme of recourſe in their Oathes and vows of greateſt and moſt publique concernment of a three-fold Deity, *Supplicium Exauditori, Purgatori, Malorum depulſori.*

I doubt not but wee heere aſſembled for the Common-wealth in this *Parliament*, ſhall meet with all theſe Attributes in our Soveraigne.

I make no queſtion, but he will gratiouſly heare our Supplications. Purge away our Grievances, and expell Malefactors, that is, remove ill Miniſters, and put good in their places.

No leſſe can be expected from his wiſdome and goodneſſe.

But let me tell you Mr. *Speaker*, if we partake not of one Attribute more in him; if we addreſſe not our ſelves unto that, I meane *Bonorum Conſervatori*; we can have no ſolid, no durable Comfort in all the reſt.

Let his Majeſty heare our Complaint never ſo Compaſſionatly.

Let

Let him purge away our Grievances never ſo efficaciouſly.

Let him puniſh and diſpell ill Miniſters never ſo exemplarily.

Let him make choyce of good ones never ſo exactly.

If there be not a way ſettled to preſerve and keep them good; the miſchiefes and they will all grow againe like *Sampſons* Locks, and pull downe the Houſe upon our heads. Beleeve it Mr. *Speaker*, they will.

It hath beene a Maxime among the wiſeſt Legiſlators, that whoſoever meanes to ſettle good Lawes, muſt proceed in them, with a ſiniſter opinion of all Mankind; and ſuppoſe that whoſoever is not wicked, it is for want only of the opportunity. It is that opportunity of being ill Mr. *Speaker*, that we muſt take away, if ever we meane to be happy, which can never be done, but by the frequencie of *Parliaments*.

No State can wiſely bee confident of any publique Miniſters continuing good, longer then the Rod is over him.

Let

Let me appeale to all thoſe that were preſent in this Houſe at the agitation of the *Petition* of *Right*. And let them tell themſelves truly, of whoſe promotion to the management of affaires doe they thinke the generality would at that time have had better hopes then of M. *Noy*, and Sir *Thomas Wentworth*, both having bin at that time, and in that buſineſſe as I have heard, moſt keen and active Patriots, and the latter of them to the eternall aggravation of his Infamous treachery to the Common-wealth be it ſpoken, the firſt mover, and inſiſter to have this clauſe added to the *Petition* of *Right*, that for the comfort and ſafety of his Subjects, his Majeſty would be pleaſed to declare his will and pleaſure, that all his Miniſters ſhould ſerve him according to the Lawes and Statutes of the Realme.

And yet Mr. *Speaker*, to whom now can all the inundations upon our liberties under pretence of Lawe, and the late ſhipwrack at once of all our propertie, be attributed more then to *Noy*, and thoſe, and all other miſchiefes whereby this Monarchie hath beene brought almoſt to the brinke of deſtruction, ſo much to any as to that Grand Apoſtate to the Common-wealth, the now Lieutenant of *Ireland*?

The

The first I hope *God* hath forgiven in the other world; and the latter must not hope to be pardoned it in this, till he be dispatcht to the other.

Let every man but consider those men as once they were.

The excellent Law for the security of the Subject enacted immediatly before their coming to imployment, in the contriving whereof themselves were principall Actors.

The goodnesse and vertue of the King they served, and yet the high and publique oppressions that in his time they have wrought. And surely there is no man but will conclude with me, that as the deficience of *Parliament* hath bin the *Causa Causarum* of all the mischiefes and distempers of the present times: so the frequencie of them is the sole Catholique Antidote that can preserve and secure the future from the like.

Mr. *Speaker*, let me yet draw my Discourse a little nearer to his Majesty himselfe, and tell you, that the frequencie of *Parliaments* is most essentially necessary to the power, the security, the glory of the King.

There

There are two wayes Mr. Speaker, of powerfull Rule, either by Feare, or Love, but one of happy and safe Rule, that is, by Love, that *Firmissimum Imperium quo obedientes gaudent.*

To which *Camillus* advised the Romans. Let a Prince consider what it is that moves a people principally to affection, and dearnesse, towards their Soveraigne, He shall see that there needs no other Artifice in it, then to let them injoy unmolested by, what belongs unto them of right; If that have beene invaded and violated in any kind, whereby affections are alienated, the next consideration for a wise Prince that would be happy, is how to regaine them; to which three things are equally necessary.

Reinstating them in their former liberty.

Revenging them of the Authors of those violations.

And securing them from Apprehensions of the like againe.

The first God be thanked, we are in a good way of.

The second in warme pursuit of.

But the third as essentiall as all the rest, till we be certaine of Trienniall *Parliament*, at the least; I professe I can have but cold hopes of.

I beseech you then *Gentlemen*, since that security for the future is so necessary to that blessed union of affections, and this Bill so necessary to that security.

Let us not be so wanting to our selves; let us not be so wanting to our Soveraigne, as to forbeare to offer unto him, this powerfull, this everlasting Philter to Charme unto him the hearts of his people, whose vertue can never evaporate.

There is no man Mr. *Speaker*, so secure of anothers friendship, but will thinke freequent intercourse and accesse very requisite to the support, to the Confirmation of it: Especially if ill offices have bin done between them; if the raysing of jealousies hath beene attempted.

There is no Friend but would be impatient to be debarred from giving his Friend succour and relieſe in his necessities.

Mr.

Mr. *Speaker*, permit me the comparison of great things with little, what friendship, what union can there be so comfortable, so happy, as betweene a gracious Soveraigne and his people? and what greater misfortune can there be to both, then for them to be kept from intercourse, from the meanes of clearing misunderstandings, from interchange of mutuall benefits?

The people of *England* Sir, cannot open their Eares, their Hearts, their Mouthes, nor their Purses, to his Majestie, but in *Parliament*.

We can neither heare him, nor complain, nor acknowledge, nor give, but there.

This Bill Sir, is the sole Key that can open the way to a frequencie of those reciprocall endeerments, which must make and perpetuate the happinesse of the King and Kingdome.

Let no man object any derogation from the Kings Prerogative by it. Wee doe but present the Bill, 'tis to be made a Law by

his honour, his power, will be as conspicuous, in commanding at once that *Parliaments* shall assemble every third yeare, as in commanding a *Parliament* to be called this or that yeare: there is more of Majesty in ordaining primary and universall Causes, then in the actuating particularly of subordinate effects.

I doubt not but that glorious King *Edward* the third, when he made those Lawes for the yearly Calling of *Parliament*, did it with a right sence of his dignity and honour.

The truth is Sir, the Kings of *England* are never in their glory, in their splendor, in their Majestique Soveraignty, but in *Parliaments*.

Where is the power of imposing Taxes? Where is the power of restoring from incapacities? Where is the legislative Authority? Marry in the King, Mr. *Speaker*. But how? In the King circled in, fortified and evirtuated by his *Parliament*.

The King out of *Parliament* hath a limitted, a circumscribed jurisdiction. But wayted on by his *Parliament*, no Monarch of the East is so absolute in dispelling Grievances.

Mr.

Mr. *Speaker*, in chaſing ill Miniſters, we do but diſſipate Clouds that may gather againe, but in voting this Bill, we ſhall contribute, as much as in us lyes to the perpetuating our Sun, our Soveraigne, in his veſticall, in his noone-day luſtre.

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